

REMARKS**1. Status of claims**

After entry of the above amendment, claims 1, 4-5, and 8 are pending and under consideration, claims 9-19 are withdrawn from consideration, and claims 2-3 and 6-7 have been canceled without prejudice.

2. Support for amendment

The above amendment incorporates the limitations previously recited by claims 3 and 7 into independent claims 1 and 5. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

3. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-2 and 5-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Darouiche et al., US 5,624,704 ("Darouiche") in view of Holley et al., US 6,585,767. The Examiner also rejected claims 1-2 and 5-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shu et al., US 5,948,019 in view of Darouiche. By the above amendment, claims 2 and 6 have been canceled and claims 1 and 5 have been amended to incorporate the limitations previously recited by claims 3 and 7. The Examiner indicated claims 3 and 7 recited patentable subject matter, as will be discussed below, and therefore Applicants request this rejection of claims 1 and 5 be withdrawn.

4. Allowable subject matter

The Examiner objected to claims 3-4 and 7-8 as being dependent on a rejected base claim but allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the above amendment, claims 1 and 5 have

been rewritten to incorporate all limitations of dependent claims 3 and 7 and Applicants submit the basis for this objection has been removed.

5. *Conclusion*

Applicants submit all pending claims under consideration are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned patent agent at (713) 934-4065 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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